

August 2017

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union**EU integration process in CEE countries****Rule of Law in Poland; Progress on Migration and Security Union**

In order to protect the rule of law in Poland, the Commission substantiated its grave concerns on the planned reform of the judiciary in Poland in a Rule of Law Recommendation addressed to the Polish authorities. In the Commission's assessment, this reform amplifies the systemic threat to the rule of law in Poland already identified in the rule of law procedure started by the Commission in January 2016. The Commission requested the Polish authorities to address these problems within one month and asked the Polish authorities notably not to take any measure to dismiss or force the retirement of Supreme Court judges.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/rule-law-poland-progress-migration-and-security-union-2017-jul-26_en

EU-Ukraine Association Agreement fully enters into force

The Association Agreement, including its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), is the main tool for bringing Ukraine and the EU closer together: it promotes deeper political ties and stronger economic links, as well as respect for common European values. The DCFTA provides a framework for modernising Ukraine's trade relations and economic development by opening up markets and harmonising laws, standards and regulations with EU and international norms. President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, said: *"Determination is a virtue. Today, in spite of all the challenges, we have made it. With the entry into force of the Association Agreement with Ukraine, the European Union is delivering on its promise to our Ukrainian friends. I thank all those who made it possible: those who stood on Maidan and those who are working hard to reform the country for the better. This is a day of celebration for our European continent."*

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-3045_en.htm

State aid: Commission approves €45 million Czech support scheme for refuelling and recharging stations for low emission vehicles

The European Commission has found Czech plans to support the creation of a network of refuelling and recharging stations for low emission vehicles to be in line with EU state aid rules. The measure contributes to reducing CO2 emissions without unduly distorting competition in the Single Market.

Commissioner Margrethe Vestager, in charge of competition policy, said: *"The Czech scheme is yet another good example of how Member States can contribute to the fight against global warming. The scheme will promote alternative fuels and reduce harmful car emissions, and will encourage consumers and businesses to use greener transportation, without distorting competition"*.

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2501_en.htm

Pros, advantages and obligations resulting from EU membership

European Solidarity Corps rebuilds earthquake-hit regions

A first group of European Solidarity Corps volunteers has arrived in Norcia, Italy, to help repair damage and rebuild social services for the local community after they were hit by severe earthquakes a year ago. The volunteers will help reconstruct historic buildings, including the Basilica of San Benedetto and the Monastery of the Benedictines. They will also work with the young and the elderly of Norcia, organising workshops, outdoor activities and cultural events.
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/european-solidarity-corps-rebuilds-earthquake-hit-regions-2017-aug-17_en

New and improved car emissions tests become mandatory on 1 September

As of 1 September 2017, new car models will have to pass new and more reliable emissions tests in real driving conditions ("Real Driving Emissions" – RDE) as well as an improved laboratory test ("World Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure" – WLTP) before they can be driven on European roads. The Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, Jyrki Katainen said: *"The new emissions tests are a milestone in our ongoing work for cleaner and more sustainable cars over the coming years. But more remains to be done. The emissions scandal has shown that we need more independence in car testing, stronger market surveillance and the possibility for the Commission to intervene in case of wrongdoing. The Commission presented a proposal in January 2016 to achieve just that. It has been on the table since and it is high time that the European Parliament and Council adopt it. And we need to decisively pursue EU-wide efforts to foster low emissions mobility."*
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2822_en.htm

General development of the EU

Towards a fairer food supply chain: European Commission asks for input

The European Commission is launching an EU-wide public consultation on how to make the EU food supply chain fairer. Farmers, citizens and other interested parties are invited to share their views on the functioning of the food supply chain through an online consultation that runs until 17 November. There are indications that the added value in the food supply chain is not adequately distributed across all levels of the chain due, for instance, to differences in bargaining power between smaller and thus more vulnerable operators including farmers and small businesses, and their economically stronger and highly concentrated commercial partners.
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2521_en.htm

10 years since the start of the crisis: back to recovery thanks to decisive EU action

The global financial crisis began 10 years ago and led to the European Union's worst recession in its six-decade history. The crisis did not start in Europe but EU institutions and Member States needed to act resolutely to counter its impact and address the shortcomings of the initial set-up of the Economic and Monetary Union. Decisive action has paid off: today, the EU economy is expanding for the fifth year in a row. Unemployment is at its lowest since 2008, banks are stronger, investment is picking up, and public finances are in better shape. Recent economic developments are encouraging but a lot remains to be done to overcome the legacy of the crisis years. The European Commission is

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| | <p>fully mobilised to deliver on its agenda for jobs, growth and social fairness. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2401_en.htm</p> <p>One year after the referendum in the UK, an increasing majority of people in the EU are optimistic about the future of the European Union. Close to a majority of Europeans are now also optimistic about the state of their national economy. Trust in the European Union is growing – it is at its highest level since 2010, and support for the euro is greater than it has been since 2004. Moreover, a majority of respondents, from eleven non-EU countries polled for the first time, say they have a positive view of the EU. These are some of the key results from the latest Standard Eurobarometer survey published today with the Flash Eurobarometer survey “Future of Europe– Views from outside the EU”. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2127_en.htm</p> |
| <p>Introduction to EU institutions and their functioning</p> | <p>European Commission starts assessment of Member States' applications to host the European Medicines Agency and the European Banking Authority</p> <p>The application procedure to host the two UK-based EU agencies, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the European Banking Authority (EBA), came to a close at midnight, 31 July 2017. The European Commission will now assess all offers in an objective manner and on the basis of the criteria set out by President Jean-Claude Juncker and President Donald Tusk, and endorsed by the Heads of State or Government of the EU27 at the European Council (Article 50 format) on 22 June 2017. The Commission's assessment will be published online on 30 September 2017. The Council will then have a political discussion based on this assessment at the General Affairs Council (Article 50 format) in October 2017. In order to allow for a smooth and timely relocation of the two agencies, a final decision will be taken at the General Affairs Council (Article 50 format) in November 2017. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2202_en.htm</p> |
| <p>Decentralized management of EU funds</p> | <p>Juncker Plan supports brain cancer treatment with €35 million loan</p> <p>Patients who suffer from the most aggressive type of brain cancer, glioblastoma, will soon have broader access to a new form of treatment thanks to financing by the European Investment Bank (EIB). The EIB and German medical device company MagForce signed a financing agreement which will allow the company to borrow up to €35 million over the coming three years, subject to achieving a set of agreed performance criteria. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/juncker-plan-supports-brain-cancer-treatment-eu35-million-loan-2017-aug-09_en</p> <p>Investment Plan for Europe: EIB grants financing to Apeiron</p> <p>The European Investment Bank (EIB) will provide financing of €25 million to the Austrian biotech company Apeiron Biologics AG (Apeiron). The financing will support the development of new pharmaceutical products to treat cancer, particularly a rare type affecting children. The transaction with Apeiron was made possible by the support of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). EFSI is the central pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe, in which the EIB Group and the European Commission as strategic partners aim to boost the competitiveness of the European economy.</p> |

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| | <p>https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/investment-plan-europe-eib-grants-financing-apeiron-2017-aug-28_en</p> |
| <p>Multi-level governance</p> | <p>Informal meeting of agriculture ministers: European Committee of the Regions says prevention is better than cure</p> <p>On the eve of the informal meeting of EU agriculture ministers, the European Committee of the Regions cautions the Member States about increasing the crisis reserve in a tight budgetary situation, and calls for better regulation of agricultural markets. In view of the fact that the various scenarios set out by the European Commission in the reflection paper on the future of EU finances forecast a significant reduction in the EU's agriculture budget, Karl-Heinz Lambertz (BE/PES), president of the European Committee of the Regions, reiterates the CoR's position that, <i>"in order to make better use of the available budget, we need to regulate agricultural markets, not only to prevent sectoral crises but also because doing so is far cheaper than intervening at a later stage – as demonstrated by the recurring milk crises in recent years"</i>. The recovery in milk prices in early 2017 is partly explained by the milk production reduction scheme, which will have cost EUR 150 million. If this measure had been introduced earlier, it would have avoided the sharp increase in milk powder stocks to 355 000 tonnes, i.e. more than three times the ceiling set in the last reform, at a cost of more than EUR 600 million, with no effect on prices.</p> <p>http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/agriculture_informal_council_meeting.aspx</p> <p>Digital Europe: Estonia shows how innovation can improve public service</p> <p>Local and regional governments must help lead the digital revolution in the European Union, President of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) Karl-Heinz Lambertz said in Tallinn. Members of the Committee – the EU's assembly of local and regional governments – gathered in the Estonian capital to share best practises in public innovation and digital solutions that are transforming public services . Karl-Heinz Lambertz , who was elected President of the CoR in July this year, said: "Estonia is one of the world's most advanced digital societies and pioneer in e-democracy and e-governance. The Estonian success story is the perfect demonstration of the potential the transition to a digital economy can have for public administration benefiting the lives of citizens. Local and regional authorities are at the forefront in developing new and better public services with digital solutions but the EU must ensure every region reaps the benefits of the digital revolution".</p> <p>http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/digital-europe-estonia-shows-how-innovation-can-improve-public-services.aspx</p> |
| <p>Introduction to different negotiation chapters</p> | <p>Update on Brexit negotiations</p> <p>European Parliament Brexit Coordinator Guy Verhofstadt (ALDE, BE) discussed the Brexit negotiations with Employment Committee members. The debate focused on Parliament's priority: ensuring the rights of EU citizens in the UK, as well as of UK citizens in the EU. Specific issues, such as family reunification, social contributions recognition, mutual recognition of qualifications and frontier workers were addressed. Mr Verhofstadt pointed out that the Parliament should adopt a resolution in October assessing the progress of the negotiations, emphasizing the need to protect citizens' rights and a stand against a "hard border" between Ireland and the UK, which would be against the "Good Friday</p> |

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| | <p>Agreement". http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20170829IPR82603/update-on-brex-it-negotiations</p> |
| <p>Specific issues relating to the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European arrest warrant • Stockholm programme • Third pillar <p>Recognition of professional qualifications</p> | <p>Roma inclusion: More effort needed to improve access to schooling and employment</p> <p>The Commission has published the results of an assessment that looks at how Member States are implementing their national Roma integration strategies. The assessment highlights how the situation of Roma has changed since 2011. Overall, the picture is slowly improving, for instance there is now greater participation of Roma in early childhood education and a declining rate of early school-leavers. On the other hand, the assessment also shows that as many as 80% of Roma are still at risk of poverty; although this figure is lower than in 2011. First Vice-President Frans Timmermans said: <i>"The EU is built on the values of tolerance and equality. These values are not yet enjoyed by every EU citizen, and that is not acceptable. Member States have to accelerate their efforts to improve Roma integration if we are to put an end to the prejudices, segregation and discrimination still felt by Roma today."</i> http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-2961_en.htm</p> <p>Extra €500 million to fight youth unemployment approved</p> <p>The EP's Budgets Committee has approved an extra €500 million for the Youth Employment Initiative, part of a €1.2 billion top-up agreed for 2017-2020. The Budgets Committee voted by 29 in favour to 3 against, with 0 abstentions, to add €500 million to the EU Budget for 2017. Committee MEPs call on the Commission and Member States to ensure that the whole additional €500 million is fully committed by the end of 2017. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20170828IPR82513/extra-EU500-million-to-fight-youth-unemployment-approved</p> |
| <p>Introduction to different sector policies</p> | <p>Protecting workers: stricter limits on cancer-causing substances</p> <p>New EU rules to protect workers from carcinogens and mutagens in the workplace were voted in by the Employment Committee. The legislation, approved by 42 votes in favour, none against and 8 abstentions and already informally agreed with EU Ministers, sets EU-wide rules to eliminate and reduce all carcinogens and mutagens in workplaces. Employers will have to assess the risk of exposure for workers and take preventive measures. This should tackle the primary cause of work-related deaths in the EU, i.e. cancer. The aim is to help save up to 100 000 lives over the next 50 years. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20170829IPR82604/protecting-workers-stricter-limits-on-cancer-causing-substances</p> <p>European Parliament envoys welcome bilateral treaty between Sofia and Skopje, key to new regional dynamism</p> <p>The "Treaty on friendship" between Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia brings the Macedonian people a step closer to their desired membership of the EU, say MEPs. Members of the European Parliament Eduard Kukan (EPP, SK), Knut Fleckenstein (S&D, DE) and Ivo Vajgl (ALDE, SI), EP envoys for the 15 July 2015 Przino Agreement, issued the following</p> |

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| | <p>statement in response to the signature of the bilateral "Treaty on friendship, good neighbourliness and cooperation". http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20170731IPR80801/ep-envoys-welcome-sofia-and-skopje-treaty-key-to-new-regional-dynamism</p> |
| <p>Promotion of EU upcoming events and news</p> | <p>European Week of Regions and Cities: Registration open 9-12/10/2017/ Brussels/ Belgium Registration is now open for the 15th European Week of Regions and Cities, which this year will focus on the capacity of Europe's cities and regions to catalyse and respond to change. http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/European-Week-Regions-Cities-Registration.aspx</p> <p>Translating Europe Forum 2017 6-7/11/2017/ Brussels/ Belgium The Translation Department of the European Commission is organising the 4th edition of the Translating Europe Forum, focusing this year on translators skills and employability. https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/translatingeurope-forum-2017-2017-nov-06_en</p> <p>2nd European Urban Green Infrastructure Conference - Celebrating nature-based solutions for cities 29-30/11/2017/ Budapest/ Hungary The European Commission participates in the 2nd European Urban Green Infrastructure Conference (EUGIC 2017). The participants will debate how climate change and loss of biodiversity are addressed in urban areas. https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/sustainable-development-goals/2nd-european-urban-green-infrastructure-conference-celebrating-nature-based-solutions-cities-2017-nov-29_en</p> |

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